

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE**

**Mountain-Prairie Region**

**134 Union Boulevard**

**Lakewood, Colorado 80228**

For Immediate Release

August 23, 2012

### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Announces \$5.7 Million in State Wildlife Grants to Help Imperiled Species**

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The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced today that more than \$5.7 million in grants will be awarded to seven state fish and wildlife agencies to help conserve and recover imperiled species and habitats through the State Wildlife Grants (SWG) Competitive Program. This federal funding will be matched by more than \$4.6 million in non-Federal funds provided by states and their partners.

The SWG Competitive Program, part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's State Wildlife Grants program, awards grants to projects that implement strategies and actions to conserve Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) contained in approved State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plans (also known as State Wildlife Action Plans). Priority is given to large-scale cooperative conservation projects that demonstrate measurable performance results and benefits to imperiled species. Funding for the grants comes from Fiscal Year 2012 appropriations for the SWG Competitive Program.

All 56 states and territorial wildlife agencies have approved State Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plans, which collectively provide a nationwide blueprint for actions to conserve these priority species. Conserving these species can help limit costly listings under the Endangered Species Act. The plans were created through a collaborative effort among state and federal agencies, biologists, conservationists, landowners, sportsmen, and the general public. Each plan was then reviewed and endorsed by a national team consisting of members from the Fish and Wildlife Service staff as well as directors from state wildlife agencies.

### **Nebraska Game and Parks Commission**

**Title:** Nebraska Natural Legacy Project: Striding Toward Sustainability

**State(s):** Nebraska, Colorado

**Goals and Objectives:** This project will engage new conservation partners and resources for implementation of Nebraska's Natural Legacy Project, and expand the project to new Biologically Unique Landscapes (BULs) where SGCN work is lacking. These goals will be accomplished by expanding efforts into three regions. In the Colorado/Nebraska Border Panhandle, the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory will act as the lead to advance shortgrass prairie habitat improvements for Mountain

Plover, Burrowing Owl and McCown's Longspur. In northeastern Nebraska, the applicant will establish new partnerships with Natural Resources Districts for Natural Legacy Project implementation. On a statewide basis, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission will build upon its landscape-scale efforts by expanding conservation implementation to additional BULs.

**Federal Funds requested:** \$800,000; **Non-Federal match:** \$555,932

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit

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